Improving the condition of unorganised agricultural labourers

483. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken to take care of and improve the working conditions of unorganized agricultural labourers in the country;

(b) whether Government propose to instruct the concerned authorities at district levels to be more sensitive to the problems and grievances of the unorganized agricultural labourers; and

(c) if so, the details thereon and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Government has entrusted the task of drafting a Bill to improve the working conditions of the unorganized agricultural labourers in the country to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS). Further action will be taken on receipt of the draft Bill from the NCEUS.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Sir, I am thankful that the hon. Minister is taking initiative in this regard. But, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Minister to the fact that two and a half years ago, the then hon. Minister for Labour said that the Bill is being prepared. I would like to know when the Government entrusted this work or the task of drafting the Bill to the National Commission for enterprises in the Unorganised Sector. Part (b) of the question is, could the hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us what are the Terms of Reference and what are the likely contents, is there any review done, is there any progress made, what is the current status, does it include fixing of more wages, not only mere fixing but what is the mechanism for implementation, enforcement, etc.? Could you kindly throw some light on this?

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, I am grateful to the member for raising this issue. The major thing is, Sir, as we have the weavers which we have discussed, agricultural labourers are the main stake of the country and we

are doing everything possible to help the agricultural labourers which includes providing rural employment guarantee for them. Sir, under this particular reference the Draft Bill is already on the Website of the Commission. They have called for comments from all the people. The Commission has put it on their Website. Members are free to give their suggestions. Even in this House if we get some suggestions we are willing to give it to the Commission and I am sure Sir, within a period of one month the Commission will be able to submit their report. All matters relating to the agricultural workers in the unorganised sector have been referred to the Commission.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Thank you very much, Sir. But I would like to supplement. I did not see the Website but I would like to draw the kind attention of the Minister. Sir, there are different sectors like head load workers. Their problems are different. There are activities where women are employed to the maximum and Sir, we have before us fortunately, the National Employment Guarantee Scheme. There are certain schemes provided for the welfare of the labourers, the feeding centres, childcare, provision of drinking water. Are those facilities being incorporated because this Employment Guarantee Scheme covers only for 100 days? We have to account for the remaining 265 days also. So, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister, not as a question, may be as a suggestion, to take specific sector schemes and different activities...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Come to the question.

SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: ...to the labourers in the unorganized sector.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, this is the exact reason why we have brought in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Agriculture worker is not engaged fully in a year. Maybe, he gets work for 100 days or 200 days. To cover the balance period, we have brought in National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Sir, this is a matter that we are discussing for the last twenty years. There are so many Bills with the Central Government. During the tenure of the U.F. Government, a draft Bill was discussed. We have had so many discussions with the stakeholders and it is still pending. That is the tragedy. We have had discussions with the political parties, peasant organizations, State

Labour Ministers, etc. But, even after two decades, the Bill is not passed by this House. That is the problem we are facing. Naturally, whenever we discuss this Bill, which is dealing with the problems of the workers like minimum wages, social security, etc., we should be considerate. At a time, when the poor people are not getting social security support, this Bill should be passed as early as possible. There is no need for any further discussion through Internet. So many discussions have already taken place. Six, sixteen rounds of discussions have taken place. So, now, the Central Government has to give a categorical assurance that it is going to come before the House with legislation within a stipulated period. So, would the hon. Minister given an assurance in this august House that he is going to come before the House with legislation within a stipulated time-frame?

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: Sir, there are two parts of this issue. The first one is a social security scheme for the workers in the unorganized sector. That discussion is over. There is a Group of Ministers going into that and we are going to bring a Bill in this Session of Parliament itself. That is over.

The other one is on the working conditions. Today's question is regarding the working conditions of agricultural labourers. It is under discussion. It is on the website.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: There are ten drafts on this.

SHRI OSCAR FERNANDES: The draft is on the website as far as the working conditions, not the social welfare scheme of the unorganized sector workers. That is ready and it will come in this session.

About the working conditions of agricultural labourers, I would say that it is on the website which the Commission is looking into and it will submit its report, according to my information, within a month. Then, we will take it up.

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: धन्यवाद सभापति जी। सभापति जी, हम सब जानते हैं कि हमारे देश के बहुसंख्यक मजदूर असंगठित क्षेत्र में हैं और उसमें भी सबसे ज्यादा संख्या महिलाओं की है। असंगठित क्षेत्र में पुरुषों से ज्यादा संख्या महिलाओं की है। अभी जिस सोशल सेक्योरिटी स्कीम का जिक्र श्री ए॰ विजय राघवन जी कर रहे थे, मैं उसी प्रश्न को आगे बढ़ाना चाहती हूं कि बिल के बारे में तो आप कह रहे हैं कि इस सत्र में लायेंगे, लेकिन एनडीए सरकार ने वर्ष 2004 के प्रारम्भ में जो

सोशल सेक्योरिटी स्कीम अनआर्गनाइज्ड लेबरर्स के लिए बनायी थी और उसका एक पायलेट प्रोजेक्ट कुछ जिलों में शुरू होना था, क्या आपने वह पायलेट प्रोजेक्ट शुरू किया? अगर वह शुरू किया तो उसका कोई आकलन, कोई विश्लेषण अभी तक आपके पास आया है? क्या उसका समावेश आप इस बिल के अंदर करने जा रहे हैं?

श्री ऑस्कर फर्नांडिस: आदरणीय सभापति जी, वर्ष 2004 में जो एक पायलेट प्रोजेक्ट आया, वह सिर्फ कुछ दिन के लिए आया और उसके बाद सरकार ने उसको फाइनेंशियल बैंकिंग नहीं दिया। अभी हम क्या ला रहे हैं, इसके बारे में, मैं बताना चाहता हूं कि हम फाइनेंशियल बैंकिंग देकर उसकी शुरूआत करेंगे और बाद में जो सुधार ला सकते हैं, वे हम लायेंगे।

स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को पेंशन

*484. **श्री जय प्रकाश अग्रवाल:** क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या वयोवृद्ध स्वतंत्रता सेनानी को अदालती आदेश के बावजूद पेंशन का भुगतान नहीं करने के मामले में दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने मार्च, 2007 में गृह मंत्रालय में स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों की पेंशन का काम करने वाले विभाग के रवैए पर नाराजगी व्यक्त की है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) क्या केन्द्र सरकार ने पेंशन का भुगतान किए जाने संबंधी उच्च न्यायालय के मार्च, 2006 के उस आदेश का पालन न करने, जिसमें फरवरी, 2007 तक पेंशन का भुगतान करने को कहा गया था, से संबंधित अधिकारियों के विरुद्ध कोई कार्यवाही की है और पात्र स्वतंत्रता-सेनानियों को पेंशन का भुगतान सुनिश्चित करने के लिए कोई कदम उठाये हैं?

गृह मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री माणिक राव गावित): (क) से (ग) इस संबंध में एक विवरण सदन के पटल पर रखा जा रहा है।

विवरण

(क) से (ग) श्री अश्वनी कुमार मिश्रा को स्वतंत्रता सेनानी पेंशन प्रदान किए जाने के मामले में माननीय दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने दिनांक 3.5.2000 के अपने आदेश के तहत सरकार को निदेश दिया था कि पेंशनर के दावे पर नए सिरे से विचार किया जाए। तदनुसार दावे पर पुन: विचार किया गया था, उसे रद्द कर दिया गया था और 12.9.2000 को इस बारे में पेंशनर को उचित रूप से बता दिया गया था। इसके बाद एक और रिट याचिका में माननीय दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने अपने दिनांक 31.3.2006 के आदेश के तहत श्री मिश्रा को पेंशन दिए जाने की अनुमति प्रदान कर